

TOWN OF CHESTER
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING

July 24, 2019
Minutes

PRESENT: Arne Jonynas; Heather Chase; Lee Gustafson; Leigh Dakin; David Pisha

VISITORS: Julie Hance; Shawn Cunningham; Karen Conway; Chris Conway; Rick Cloud; Ruth Stanton; Lee Whiting; Doug Morrison; Tom Elgan; Victoria Elgan; Naomi Johnson; Christina Haskins; Frank Esposito; Christine Esposito; Kathryn Frizzell-DeRosia; Mark Derosia; Evan Parks; Jim Houghton; Bill Dakin; Tory Spater; Tom Bock; Randall Wiggin; Sharon Sinclair; John Henry; Lillian Willis; David Willis; Sharon Huntley; Eva Ryan; Diane Ulbrich; Bob Ulbrich

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Arne Jonynas. There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

1. PERMISSION TO USE TOWN PROPERTY:

Lee Whiting and Doug Morrison were present to request use of town property for the Wheels in the Field event. They indicated that the event will be the weekend prior to Columbus Day weekend. They are requesting to use the Pinnacle for the Scottish Trials and the portion near the information booth and Green for the Porsche event. They would like use for Friday and Saturday. They are hoping to park their bikes in a similar way to that of the Iron Ride this past weekend. Food will be cooked at the Green by the snowmobile club. Lee Whiting stated that there will be a cap of 120 people which was sold out last year.

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to authorize use of the town property for the Wheels in the Field event on October 4-6. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

It was noted that the cones will need to be set up on Saturday morning. They are hoping that the traffic cones and police contribution could be the same as for the Iron event.

2. LOCAL CONCERNS MEETING; CHURCH STREET SIDEWALK:

Naomi Johnson and Christina Haskins were present from Dufresne Group to discuss the scoping study for a sidewalk on Church Street. The power point is attached to these minutes.

Christina indicated that the scoping study for Church Street is a project that has come from the Master Plan process. The project begins at Main Street, continues up Church Street and down North Street for a small distance.

Diane Ulbrich stated that the primary concern on Church Street is traffic control. There are also tractor trailer trucks going over church street. Ruth Stanton mentioned that a stop sign is needed on Church Street near Dalrymple Street. Tom Elgan indicated that there is a lot of traffic that drives very fast over Church Street.

Arne Jonynas indicated that pedestrian safety is a primary concern in this project. He agrees that “no truck traffic” signage could be enforced as well as speed limits. He further stated that a sidewalk over Church Street has been discussed many times over the years. The construction of the sidewalk would be several years in the future. However, the traffic and speed could be looked at now.

It was suggested to review speed limit sign locations. Leigh Dakin stated that she would like to know how we can address the weight limit on Church Street for tractor trailer trucks.

A suggestion was made to install speed bumps on Church Street. Jim Houghton stated that Lebanon has speed tables which are part of the street itself that are permanent and easier to plow. Evan Parks asked if benches could be incorporated into this plan so that people can have a place to sit as they walk.

A question was asked if data could be gathered from the radar sign that could be used. Chief Cloud indicated that it does. The average speed is 26 miles per hour. It was indicated that perhaps the radar sign could be moved to the Route 11 end of Church Street. Chief Cloud stated that he can spin the sign to catch the speeds as people are coming down the hill.

A request was made to establish a planned enforcement for the speed on Church Street. Heather Chase suggested that David Pisha and Chief Cloud get together to come up with a plan and report back to the Board. Leigh Dakin would like this plan to include enforcement of trucks, weight limits and no thru truck traffic.

Tory Spater stated that the concept of connecting the existing sidewalks would be a tremendous asset for the community. A request was made to maintain the integrity of the country setting of Church Street if a sidewalk is constructed.

3. APPROVE MINUTES:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to approve the minutes of the July 2, 2019 Special Selectboard meeting. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

4. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

There were no citizen's comments.

5. OLD BUSINESS:

Gravel Extraction Project: David Pisha noted that the Noise Study has been completed. The Traffic Study is expected soon. Once these have been received, he will send the application to the Board for review.

EMS Building; David Pisha stated that the architect is reviewing multiple site plans for the project. They believe that site plan 2 would be the best option. The committee is still hoping for a fall vote.

David Pisha stated that the State came to do an inspection of the sewer plant today. He feels that the meeting and inspection went well. The state did indicate that treatment plants should be reviewed every 20 years.

6. YOSEMITE FEASIBILITY STUDY:

Lillian Willis was present on behalf of the Historic Preservation Committee. She presented a history of what has been taking place with Yosemite since the town took over the building. She also discussed the importance of the building to the community. Lillian Willis stated that the grant in 2018 was denied primarily due to the lack of a plan for a year round use and no plan for parking. Since then, she has spent a significant amount of time researching renovations that need to be done, spoken with experts and permitting authorities and met with Mark Wesner. When meeting with Mark Wesner, he indicated the steps that need to take place to create a true Feasibility Study for the building. She has also met with a structural engineer from out of state who will be sending a report of what he has found.

The Feasibility Study will go a long way toward moving the renovations and this project forward. The study will need to be done soon so that a parking solution can be determined prior to submitting a grant on October 1. Lillian Willis requested that the Board approve \$12,000 as soon as possible so that the Feasibility Study can be obtained sooner rather than later.

Arne Jonynas indicated that the \$12,000 has not been budgeted. He would prefer that this become a budgeted item in December. Arne Jonynas also stated that if the town proceeds with the Feasibility Study and the land is not given for parking, then the money is lost. Lillian Willis noted that there is interest in a land donation if the building is used for a fire museum. People want to see the Selectboard commit first.

Lee Gustafson suggested that the money would be better spent on the exterior of the building for preservation. Lillian Willis stated that she believes that it all goes together. Before the town can apply for the grant, a Feasibility Study needs to be done.

Heather Chase questioned the balance of the Revitalization budget to determine how much would be available. She also questioned the status of fund raising. Lillian Willis stated that she does not want to head up a capital campaign until the town puts forth more effort on preserving the building. Heather Chase indicated that she is proud of the efforts that the town has made towards this building. She also asked David Pisha to find out how much money the Historic Society has in their restoration fund to contribute towards this project.

Julie Hance will contact Mark Wesner to see if there are any areas in the estimate for the Feasibility Study that can be reduced in order to create a study that will help the grant application.

7. HIGHWAY SAFETY AUDIT:

Arne Jonynas stated that efforts have been made to review the speed at the high school. The Highway Safety Audit has been

A motion was made by Heather Chase to authorize Arne Jonynas to sign a letter to the Vermont Traffic Committee requesting a speed limit review. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

The Board asked David Pisha to add this to the Old Business list so that we can keep track of accomplishing the other recommendations.

8. SIGN LOAN DOCUMENTS; LOADER:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to approve the loan documents in the amount of \$129,500 to purchase the loader. Seconded by Lee Gustafson. The motion passed.

9. APPOINTMENT TO EMS BUILDING COMMITTEE:

A motion was made by Heather Chase to appoint Chief Rick Cloud and Kirby Putnam to the EMS Building Committee. Seconded by Leigh Dakin. The motion passed.

10. FINANCIAL UPDATES:

General Fund: David Pisha stated that General Fund is operating similarly to last year. Revenue is up 7,000 over last year at this time. Expenses are up 98,000, due to public works and mud season. Lee Gustafson questioned the recreation line being up \$11,000. David will look into this.

In comparison to budget, the town is \$3,600 ahead of expectation. Expenses are up \$18,000. There are some internal factors such as timing which are affecting these numbers.

Lee Gustafson questioned the county taxes line. David Pisha responded that these are paid twice per year so often it is a timing issue in payment that distorts the percentages.

Water: David Pisha indicated that water is ahead due to rate increases. Contractual services is for the water project which is due for reimbursement. Overall the department is running on track. Heather questioned the status of increasing water rates. David Pisha believes that the rates are at the required 1%. This money will be used to pay the bond payment each year.

Sewer: David Pisha indicated that when comparing actual vs actual the sewer department is up slightly in revenue. Expenses are down slightly. Budget vs actual is down slightly in revenue.

David Pisha presented a graph on the solar farm earnings which goes back 2 years. It appears that the profitability is increasing slightly over time. After transferring to the Solar Farm, the town is still ahead in earnings. These earnings are being generated by 37.3% of the field's output. If the town owned the field, there is another 43% to be gained.

The board reviewed the smaller funds. The Chester Development Fund balance is up to a balance of \$380,000.

11. NEW BUSINESS/NEXT AGENDA:

It was agreed that Yosemite will be on the next agenda.

David Pisha stated that there will be a special meeting on August 29 for discussion scoping studies for State bridges.

Heather Chase would like to review the Health Officer role at a future meeting when Arne Jonynas is present.

Lee Gustafson stated that he would like to discuss Solar Field purchase, the Information booth and the Marijuana legislation at a future meeting.

12. ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Lee Gustafson to adjourn. Seconded by Heather Chase. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Julie Hance
Secretary of the Select Board

Ben Whalen
Clerk of the Selectboard